



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

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HILDA L. SOLIS

CHAIR, BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
SUPERVISOR, FIRST DISTRICT



May 28, 2021

Ms. Celia Zavala
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
383 Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Ms. Zavala:

This is to formally submit for the public record my budget priorities and unmet needs for the fiscal year 2021-22 public budget hearings. Government Code Section 29064(b) provides that issues raised during the budget hearing process may be considered during budget deliberations, which are scheduled to commence on June 28, 2021.

Our local economy is in strong recovery and our revenues continue to improve. It is my expectation that consideration be given for the following budget requests to improve the livelihoods of not only residents in the First Supervisorial District but of all County residents. Most importantly, I urge the use of data to drive all funding decisions to ensure the equitable allocation of our limited resources.

HOMELESSNESS

Housing for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals. Consideration should be given to the housing options for individuals who have been impacted by the justice system, but often do not receive high enough assessment scores to be prioritized for permanent supportive housing. Resources should be expanded to better meet the housing needs of formerly incarcerated individuals, especially women, LGBTQ+, and non-binary individuals.

Financial Planning Services. In Los Angeles County, an estimated 293,000 households are behind on rent, owing up to \$1.3 billion. Financial coaching is a client-driven process whereby individuals work collaboratively with a financial coach to develop and meet personalized financial goals to improve their overall financial wellbeing. As expanded unemployment payments and cash relief programs end, financial coaching will play a vital role in helping clients navigate and survive shifting economic conditions. Financial coaches are also critical in helping vulnerable

populations avoid expensive, predatory financial products and consumer scams, which increase during times of crisis.

Housing and Counseling Resources for Women Impacted by the Pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to job losses for women and an increase in domestic violence. Thousands of Los Angeles County residents are forced into homelessness for these reasons, yet we lack beds for hundreds of women and children whose circumstances have changed during the pandemic. While estimates vary, calls to Los Angeles County's domestic violence hotline have increased. In December 2020, calls to the hotline increased by 32% compared to the previous year. To support women who have been affected by job loss and an increase in violence, more resources are needed that provide safe shelter and trauma counseling services for women and families impacted by the pandemic.

Homeless Services. Consideration should be given to provide funding for supportive services for youth, adults and families experiencing homelessness, especially in the downtown area of Skid Row. Non-profit services providers and faith-based organizations that are not currently eligible for Measure H funding should be given special consideration as they also provide crucial services in high-need, underserved communities.

Homeless Families. Consideration should be given to families experiencing homelessness who are involved with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). Consideration should also be given to creating more Family Unification Program (FUP) vouchers for families.

Shallow Subsidies for Formerly Unhoused Individuals. Individuals receiving Rapid Rehousing (RRH) support are expected to take over the cost of rent once the RRH support is expended. However, high rent burdens and low incomes often prohibit an individual from fully taking on the cost of rent. They may need a longer-term shallow subsidy to support their rent payments and prevent them from falling back into homelessness. Expansion of shallow subsidy options should be considered, with special focus on access by formerly incarcerated individuals.

Youth Housing. CEO Homeless Initiative should invest funding to ensure youth, including those exiting the foster care system, are housed appropriately and adequately. Addressing youth homelessness should be viewed as a strategy to prevent chronic homelessness, but instead it does not receive the attention or investment necessitated. To that end, more Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) and Family Unification Program (FUP) vouchers should be leveraged for this population of youth. This means coordination with the Los Angeles Homeless Service Authority (LAHSA), DCFS, and Probation. Additionally, DCFS should continue to invest more support into transitional housing programs. Per my earlier motion, the number of transitional housing units has increased by 50% in some cases – but more efforts must be dedicated to meet the full need of these young people.

IMMIGRATION

Legal Representation. Consideration should be given to provide ongoing funding to support the LA Justice Fund Phase II Program as a long-term effort to provide legal representation for immigrants facing deportation, detention, or other immigration-related legal challenges. The Office of Immigrant Affairs (OIA) relies heavily on a community-based network of free or low-cost legal aid providers as the County is unable to provide direct legal representation.

Media & Outreach. The County must enable the OIA to provide residents meaningful access to critical resources in their primary language through strategic partnerships with ethnic media. Consideration should be given to provide funding for robust outreach services in multiple languages to help inform residents about legal aid, consumer and fraud protection, immigrant rights education, and other services available, particularly for recently-impacted immigrant populations such as: Deferred Action for Child Arrivals recipients, immigrants with Temporary Protected Status, and any individual that could be deemed a “public charge” for the purposes of immigration enforcement. There are well over 200 languages spoken in Los Angeles County, and more than half of the County’s residents speak a language other than English at home.

Immigrant Youth in Foster Care. Consideration should be given to ensure youth in foster care and the probation system receive immigration relief, including Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS). This means that the County should continue to fund legal services that provide expertise on this area of the law and can provide youth with the representation they need to apply for SIJS and other relief.

Translation Services. Consideration should be given to provide funding to ensure that County services are linguistically-competent. Language is often a barrier for our most vulnerable residents who need to access government services. This should include American Sign Language.

HEALTH

Prevention Efforts. Consideration should be given for additional funding to prevent child abuse, neglect, and other maltreatment. This should include funding for the full array of Home Visitation programs (e.g. Nurse Family Partnership and Healthy Families America) currently available to families at risk of child welfare system involvement, particularly expectant and parenting youth in foster care.

Social Determinants of Health. The COVID-19 pandemic has shed light on longstanding health disparities within Los Angeles County. Black and Latinx communities were hit hardest by this pandemic, and Latinx residents have become ill and passed away at significantly higher rates than

other demographics due to chronic disease. This is largely due to health factors outside of the disease itself, such as living conditions, food insecurity, housing insecurity, and environmental health. Differences in social determinants of health contribute to the glaring and consistent chronic disease disparities among racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups. These same conditions also drive disparities in mental health, with many common mental disorders shaped by the social, economic, and physical environments in which people live. These systemic disparities bar access from some groups from being truly healthy. Funding should be allotted to address Social Determinants of Health, conditions in the environment that affect a wide range of health and quality of life outcomes.

Promotores. To fully address health equity, we must build on initiatives that provide accessible, culturally-appropriate assistance that help patients overcome healthcare system barriers. As made evident during this pandemic, the promotores program is incredibly effective in reaching underserved communities, providing multilingual outreach to guide community members towards testing, vaccines, and other critical resources. Positions should be expanded within the promotores program within the Health Agency.

Sub-Acute Mental Health Care Beds. Funding should be considered for the expansion of local mental health hospitals and step-down beds. Mental health experts recommend there should be at least 50 public health beds per 100,000 residents to keep up with demand, and as of 2019, LA County had less than half that. These needs have only been exacerbated by the pandemic and it has a significant impact on the physical, mental, and financial well-being of millions of residents across the County.

Supporting Outpatient Care and My Health LA. During the pandemic, many people have forgone essential healthcare due to fears of contracting COVID in hospitals and clinics. As such, chronic ailments like diabetes, heart conditions, and hypertension have gone untreated for over a year, resulting in worsening health conditions. This is especially pronounced in minority communities, further exacerbating racial disparities in healthcare. These existing chronic conditions contributed to significantly higher death rates in the Latinx community, which experiences significantly higher rates of underlying and chronic disease. Funding should be considered to provide outreach to communities historically impacted by chronic health conditions to reintegrate them with the healthcare system and connect them to care.

Medical Support and Medical Hubs for Foster Youth. Consideration should be given for additional staffing and support for medical hubs for foster children. Specifically, consideration should be given to the continuum of care for pediatric patients seen in the medical hubs and creating additional medical hubs in areas of need, such as Pomona. As do other hubs, these should

also include additional services beyond Initial Medical Evaluations, Medical Screenings, and Forensic Exams – and extend to an array of medical and healthcare services youth in foster care need.

Student Mental Health Support. Multiple studies have shown a surge in anxiety and depression among children and adolescents since the pandemic began. Prior to COVID-19, as many as one in five children had a diagnosed mental health disorder. However, the pandemic intensified existing mental and behavioral health challenges, resulting in an increase in emergency department visits by children under the age of 18 for mental health reasons. Funding should be considered to hire additional mental health professionals specializing in children's mental health to provide additional supports to school-age youth.

Childhood obesity. The COVID-19 pandemic has wrought havoc on children's mental and physical health, and rates of childhood obesity are skyrocketing. Childhood obesity is directly related to poor-adult health outcomes such as increased rates of diabetes and liver disease. To help reduce the burden of childhood obesity, additional funding is needed for school-based nutrition programs for children and families, including expanding more nutritious foods available on school campuses.

Improve Vision Care of Children: Consideration should be given to ensure children have access to vision and eye care. Funding should be allocated to programs like Vision to Learn, which deploy mobile clinics to schools to conduct vision screenings for all students, utilizing medically appropriate tools. This should include ensuring children can pick their own eyeglasses if they are prescribed glasses, so they feel confident in their new eyewear. Through a recent survey, UCLA determined that providing glasses to children improved both their Reading GPAs and their Math GPAs. UCLA doctors found that 80% of classroom learning is visual. In addition, over 20% of students have a vision problem that can be identified by screening and over 80-90% of those defects can be corrected with glasses. Low-income and minority students are disproportionately affected by untreated visual impairments; and, for a host of reasons, experience more obstructions to care and generally have less access to corrective lenses.

Health Clinic Expansion in High Need Areas. Consideration should be given to establish new health clinics in high-need areas, and support clinics located in underserved areas. Areas that have a high density of existing or new low income patients that lack access to a nearby Department of Health Services (DHS) clinic should be supported. Additional priority should be given to areas with a high-density of minority populations that have traditionally lacked access to healthcare resources.

Mental Health Urgent Care Clinics (UCCs). Mental Health Urgent Care Clinics are walk-in clinics for individuals with an urgent mental health need. These clinics help avert psychiatric emergency room visits and involuntary hospitalizations, and foster recovery for individuals and families through the promotion of hope and wellness. Given the significant need, funding should be provided to create new Mental Health UCCs in areas that are lacking in such facilities.

Mental Health Services at Libraries. To hire additional mobile mental health units dedicated to County libraries to provide onsite services to people experiencing homelessness.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Consideration for gap funding for the following priority projects:

LAC+USC Restorative Care Village. To include: a Mental Health Wellness and Urgent Care Center; Respite and Recovery Center; Inpatient Psychiatric Hospital; and Permanent Supportive Housing.

The iconic General Hospital. To prepare the building to be redeveloped for affordable housing and mix-use purposes.

Adams and Grand/H. Claude Hudson Campus. To repurpose the building for mix use, including affordable housing.

MacLaren Hall Campus. To fully reimagine the site by creating a park and redeveloping the remaining space for housing and workforce opportunities.

The River Park. To develop a much-needed park and multi-use trail along the San Gabriel River.

FAMILY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Extended Foster Care. Young adults who turned 21 in extended foster care on or after April 17, 2020 (“the April Cohort”) are entitled to receive continued supports through September 30, 2021. Yet once September comes, DCFS and the Probation Department retain responsibility for ensuring these young people have the connections to housing, education, workforce, and mental health care. This means partnering with LAHSA on transition conferences, the County’s Workforce Development, Aging, and Community Services Department (WDACS) on workforce programs, and the Department of Mental Health (DMH) on mental health support. Significant funding should be dedicated to these almost 1,800 youth to ensure they have what they need to be successful.

Families with Domestic Violence History. DCFS should allocate funding to keep families together whenever possible. This means finding strategies to prevent children from being removed based on the “failure to protect” standard, only compounding their pain and trauma. To that end, DCFS should ensure their workforce has an understanding of the unique and dynamic issues related to domestic violence. This could include a pilot program that’s aim is to safely and properly reduce removals by partnering with local domestic violence organizations to provide in-house specialization in the form of a “domestic violence specialist”. Additionally, funding should be allocated to ensure DCFS contracts with domestic violence service providers to support reunification.

Services for Youth who are LGBTQ+. There have been far too many deaths by suicide of LGBTQ+ youth in foster care. Other issues are also troubling that they encounter in group homes, foster homes, and other settings. DCFS must invest funding and support to ensure these young people have services that meet their needs. This means DCFS must invest further in training and other support for their workforce. There is a particular need to support youth who are LGBTQ+ with respect to any bullying prevention. This must become a focal point of DCFS’ work.

Social Security Payments. A recent investigation illuminated that counties and states often collect young people in foster care’s Supplemental Security Insurance (SSI) payments to pay down their foster care maintenance payments. Although federal legal changes may be needed, DCFS must invest funding to ensure these young people get the SSI payments they are entitled to receive. SSI is a critical safety net program that prevents homelessness, supports young people with disabilities, and provides funding for young people once they exit foster care.

Supervised Independent Living Placements (SILP). Funding should be invested for DCFS to purchase an apartment building as a pilot program and have each apartment pre-approved as a SILP so that there is no delay in approval/monthly payment for young people ages 18 to 21 in foster care. This could help ensure young people do not experience housing instability.

Food Security. COVID-19 has only magnified the hunger crisis in Los Angeles County. The Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) must enhance access to food services, including through food banks and food pantries. Programs should be created for those who do not qualify for CalFresh and other benefits. The need remains for DPSS and DCFS to improve its efforts to ensure transition age youth and youth enrolled in schools can access CalFresh.

Workforce Opportunities for DPSS Clients. More funding should be allocated to support DPSS clients with workforce opportunities. These workforce opportunities, particularly the Greater Avenues for Independence and General Relief for Opportunities to Work programs, must take into account these clients’ unique circumstances.

Employer Engagement. To support efforts that encourage businesses to hire justice-involved individuals, such as the Fair Chance Program. This includes increases efforts needed by the County as an employer as well.

Development of a New Department. Implementation of a new County Economic Workforce Development Department.

Anti-Hate Initiative. Consideration should be given to expand the LA vs. Hate Program, which is a successful model on how to address hate and provide services to victims. Hate crimes and incidents, particularly against Asian Americans, have skyrocketed during the past year. The County should expand the capacity of the LA vs. Hate Program to stem the rising tide of hate.

Expansion of Upfront Family Finding (UFF) Pilot. Consideration should be given to the Countywide expansion of the UFF Pilot. Now operational in ten DCFS regional offices, the UFF Protocol has demonstrated an impressive 81 percent rate of placement with kin, from January through June of 2020. This program must be expanded Countywide immediately as children in foster care generally do best when they are with their relative caregivers.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Board-created Commissions. Adequate staffing is needed for the Board-created commissions and bodies so that they can effectively implement their tasks and responsibilities that include increasing transparency and accountability of law enforcement and the much needed expansion and creation of alternative to incarceration programs in the County:

- Probation Oversight Commission
- Office of Inspector General
- Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission
- Alternatives to Incarceration Initiative

Public Defender's Office. Additional staffing and resources are needed to adequately provide legal services for indigent clients in the County and ensure accountability and transparency of law enforcement:

- Law Enforcement Accountability Unit—additional staffing requested.
- Client Case Management System and IT support staff to properly manage the thousands of clients they engage with every year.
- Staffing for the Post-Conviction Team to help with sentence reduction, recalling sentences, resentencing, mitigating evidence for youthful offenders, Proposition 47 resentencing, Proposition 36, and supporting District Attorney Gascon's reform policies.

- Staff to support Alternatives to Incarceration and diversion programs that align with the Board's priorities.
- Administrative support (analysts, human resource professionals)

Alternate Public Defender. Additional staffing and resources are needed for:

- the restoration of 13 attorneys; and
- the hiring of three psychiatric social workers and three paralegals to provide adequate legal services for clients.

Medical Examiner-Coroner. Additional staffing and resources are needed for:

- three Coroner Investigators to support timely field and hospital investigations in the setting of increased caseload;
- two Forensic Technician I to support the performance of autopsies (currently delays exist due to limited forensic tech staff); and
- one Senior Criminalist to support the increased caseload in the toxicology laboratory as a result of increasing opioid (fentanyl) deaths.

Family Assistance Program. To support families in low income communities of color who have been victims of deputy involved shootings with burial costs, grief counseling and other healing services.

Staffing and Ongoing Funding for the Office of Violence Prevention (OVP). The current funding for OVP ends in FY 22-23. OVP has been a vital partner in helping to develop a gang intervention and prevention plan in the First District.

Countywide Plan for Anti-violence, Gang Prevention and Intervention. To invest in community-based programs that address gun and gang violence, specifically in three areas in the First District: East Los Angeles/Commerce, Pomona, and Puente Valley.

Community Care Beds. To increase the number of beds in a holistic, community-based system of care, specifically to serve women in jail with severe mental illness.

Alternatives to Incarceration. To expand programs that decompress the jail population and prevent people from being incarcerated to begin with.

Capital Projects for Black and Latinx Businesses. To align with voter-approved Measure J to support business owners and community-based organizations that serve low income communities of color.

One-time Funding for Measure R Consultant for the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission (COC). In 2020, voters overwhelmingly supported Measure R that allowed the COC to have subpoena power, but also directed it to create a Comprehensive Public Safety Reinvestment Plan. The COC has been unable to fulfill this voter mandate due to not having the funding to bring on a consultant.

Ongoing Funding for the Office of Diversion and Reentry (ODR). Fiscal intervention is needed to resolve the fiscal cliff situation, including structural changes so that ODR can apply and receive federal funding. They are a vital partner in closing the Men's Central Jail (MCJ), however, their current model does not allow them to expand their programming.

Funding for Men's Central Jail Closure Plan. Funding is needed to build the system of care, and ongoing funding is also needed to sustain 3,600 to 4,000 beds in the community for people with severe mental health needs, co-occurring disorders, and substance use dependencies, with a specific focus on women.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Senior Programming at Parks. To address the growing participation of seniors at County Parks and the limited existing budget of the Parks & Recreation Department.

Full Restoration of Park Programming and Maintenance. To ensure County parks are fully operational as the County reopens its facilities post-COVID-19.

Parks After Dark. Increase diverse programming especially for our Parks in disadvantaged communities such as Parks After Dark.

Interdepartmental Code Enforcement Taskforce & Funding for Compliance. To investigate environmental hazardous sites, conduct code enforcement and monitor compliance in particularly vulnerable communities, such as City Terrace/Whiteside in the First District.

Community Land Trust. To fund property acquisitions in disadvantaged communities.

Extended Hours for Enforcement. To improve the quality of life for residents in the County's unincorporated areas by addressing parking, graffiti, nuisance abatement, and zoning violations.

TRANSPORTATION

Vision Zero. Funding consideration should be given to Vision Zero corridor pilot projects to reduce the severity and frequency of traffic-related collisions in unincorporated areas, consistent with the Vision Zero Action Plan.

Zero-Emissions. Funding consideration should be given for a comprehensive plan to gradually transition the County's transit bus/shuttle fleet to zero-emission vehicles, in compliance with the State's broader plan.

General Transit Improvements. Funding consideration should be given to improve transit routes, stops, and stations such as benches, shelters, signage, bus pads, bus stops, and cooling zones with shaded canopies and trees, etc. Adequate funding should be allocated to ensure good repair and cleanliness of these facilities.

LA River Master Plan. Funding consideration should be given to implement projects in the opportunity areas identified in the LA River Master Plan, specifically at the Rio Hondo Confluence.

East LA Parking Benefit District. Seed funding should be considered to help regulate parking supply/demand for local businesses and residents and to provide services, including (but not limited to) parking meters, construction of parking structures, sidewalk cleaning, free WiFi, etc.

San Gabriel Valley Greenway Network Implementation. Funding consideration should be given for the design and construction of multiuse paths, access points, and amenities identified as part of the San Gabriel Valley Greenway Network planning process.

OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Project Labor Agreements (PLA). Prioritize Countywide PLA with the trade unions.

Business Engagement. To support small and social enterprise businesses in disadvantaged, low income communities, specifically in the unincorporated areas that are minority-owned and women-owned:

- A permanent outreach team to provide granular technical assistance including in-person services.
- Culturally-competent and multilingual consumer protection campaigns to protect business owners from predatory loans.

Local and Targeted Worker Hiring Policy. Support efforts to target workers who live locally and face barriers to employment, such as people experiencing homelessness, undocumented residents and justice involved people, and enhance resources for effective engagement to reach community and local businesses to benefit from new public-private developments.

American Job Centers. Consideration for High Road Training funding for pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities including tablets and transportation services for the participants.

County Employment Programs. Ongoing funding is needed for the County's programs that provide pathways to permanent employment for opportunities with and external to the County; these include: TempLA, YouthBridges, Youth@Work, and PLACE, among others. Additionally, funding consideration should be given for the design and creation of pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs within County Departments to offer a robust way to build a well-paying career through on-the-job-training with educational instruction.

Community Outreach. It is critical to enhance all efforts with respect to voter registration, particularly in areas where the majority of residents are renters. Related to voter registration, funding should be allocated to ensuring promotoras are leveraged to communicate the importance of civic engagement to residents.

Media Efforts. In advance of the November 2020 election, Los Angeles County partnered with ethnic media to inform residents about changes to the voting system. Such partnerships must continue and grow to keep residents informed of upcoming elections and other services provided by the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk.

Replacement of the County's Property Tax System. The County currently uses a 40-year old property tax system to create and issue annual and supplemental property tax bills for over 2.4 million parcels, post payments, process tax refunds, and distribute approximately \$20 billion in property tax collections and assessments to over 400 taxing entities, including cities, schools, community colleges, special districts and the county. Costs of maintaining the antiquated system are high and modifications are difficult due to the complexity and age of the system. The County, our 88 cities, 70 (redevelopment) Successor Agencies, community colleges, school districts, special districts, including the County's Fire, Public Works and Public Library departments are dependent on the property taxes that collected based on this system.

Ms. Celia Zavala
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
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If you or your staff would like to discuss these requests in more detail, please contact Tami Omoto-Frias of my staff at (213) 974-4111.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Hilda L. Solis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Hilda" being the most prominent.

HILDA L. SOLIS

Chair, Board of Supervisors

c: Fesia Davenport, Chief Executive Officer